

BEULAH'S SCRAPBOOK~~~

NUMBER TWO

3 APRIL 44

A free supplement to NEBULA, published occasionally by Larry Shaw to present interesting and odd items not strictly in accord with Beulah's policy. FANDOM HOUSE; Curfew Pubs Division.

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TROUBLE IN PARADISE

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((The reports have been confused; the fans no doubt have been puzzled. That there has been a break-up in the hitherto peaceful group of fans in Los Angeles is definite, but the status of each individual fan in that fair city seems to change daily, and each one concerned seems to have his own version of the whole affair. One thing stands out: a lot of people formerly calling Forry Ackerman a friend have suddenly become very much "fed up" with him, with his ideas and actions, and with any fans who remain loyal to him. This group--with "The Knaves" as its nucleus and several recent additions--has been turning out large quantities of propaganda, the main theme of which, naturally, is "We don't like Ackerman!" Presenting reasons for their dislike seems to be a trifle difficult; statements purporting to be reasons are a pretty confused babble at best. Up to now, however, the "other side" has not been heard from. I asked Forry about the situation and received the two letters reproduced here. This is done in the interests of clearer understanding, and because--frankly--I am very much prejudiced toward the side represented by 4e's statements. --Larry Shaw))

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11 Mar 44

Dear Larry

What's the trouble in Paradise? Well, the bubble burst out here when the Knave-Alcoholites, headed by Yerke-Laney+Pogo, wanted to turn the LASFS upsidedown & make the clubroom into a playpen for active fen whose activity was to consist primarily of chasing hot & cold running females (& viceversa). The New Order grew restless for alcohol & folderol with fantasy as a subsidiary. In the ultimate, one could envision our Shangri-LA appointed with a juke box, a pinball machine, a liquorgan & a waxt floor for dancing. But I think they're finally reconciled to the fact that they can't "reform" us--They principally Yerke, Laney, Pogo & Bronson; We--myself, Morojo, Daugherty, Joquel, Kepner; Tweenys consisting of Freehafer & Russell, temporarily mems of both bodies--& are forming their own socy, which I believe is (aptly) termed "The Outsiders". It is very much like Jekyll & Hyde, to me, or Stapledon's "Darkness & the Light". I expect the LASFS, rid of its destructive elements, will go ahead to greater glories; the gang that walked out on the LASFS, well, they weren't quitting the club...they walked out on themselves.

The chiefest occupation of the Uninviteds will be, for some time, I expect, the prosecution of a propaganda barrage designed to discredit me in fandom, a vendetta vicious & unscrupulous. Quoting a Laney letter of 3 Mar to me: "You have made fandom your life, Ackerman. I wish you could see what substantial fans and authors really say about you when they let down their hair. In the evidence I've collected so far, the kindest thing any fan has said about you is that you 'seemed all right, though of course, rather unintelligent'. If the dope I've gotten on you (from out-of-town fans, of course) is a fair sample of the way fandom really feels about you and your pussyfooting, assinine, banal, and perverted ways.....Well, you'd better quit fandom, fandom wants no part of you." If I thought this held true substantially of U, Jack Speer, Bar-

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bara Bovard, EEEvans, Paul Freehafer, Jack Williamson, the Ashleys, the Heinleins, Walt Liebscher, Catherine Moore, Bill Watson, Ray Washington, Tom Daniel, Bob Tucker, Julie Unger, the Rocklynnes, Walt Dunkelberger, the Carnells, Leigh Brackett, Bob Hoffman, Joe Gibson, Milty Rothman, Blaine Dunmire, Morrie Dollens, Harry Warner, Ray Bradbury, Don Wollheim, Doc Lowndes, Art Widner, EESmith, Ron Clyne, Hannes Bok, Mary Gnaedinger, Les Croutch, David Evans, Frank Parker, JMRosenblum & a few others...I shoud indeed retire to reading my mags & bks in silence, the most disillusioned fan in history.

Still I say: Stforever!

JE

19 Mar 44

Altho the current Acolyte seems to have been out a wk I have not seen a copy, but I have been told it carrys a comparative list of publication activity, Knaves vs LASFSians. I understand that credited to the energys of the former are Acolyte, Fantasite, Fan Slants, The Knave & Toward Tomorrow. The LASFS's sole representative is Vom. Let us consider these claims: The current Acolyte was workt on when Laney was fully affiliated with the LASFS, completed "outside"; at best is a bastard product (with no undertones on the adjective). Fantasite may properly be ascribed to the Outsiders. The Knave--no dout about its origin! BUT: Mel Brown produced the prodigious 100 pgs comprising the first 2 Fan Slants quite with LASFS equipment, supplys, assistance & monetary credit, yet credit for this is claimd as an achievement of the rival group by virtue of political legerdemain. Something like Rap crowing over Pocketbook's selections from Amazing, failing to mention the storys were about 15 yrs old; they'd probly claim credit for the Lovecraft vols. if Wandrei or Derleth suddenly came to Cal. & got in with their group. Most flagrant injustice is the capatalization on Kepner's capital issue of Toward Tomorrow, an LASFS first issue whose title has passed into Brown's hands--that's all--production of another number is still a future possibility. Why was Shangri-L'Affaires omitted from the LASFS side of the ledger? Coventry can be claimd as legitimately for the LASFS as Fantasite for the Outsiders. And Crozetti's #1 Venus is "working". I do not think we need resort to the Knave type of sophistry & list Anderson's Centauri as an LASFS product. Nor am I going to engage in regular refutations of lies, half-truths & mis-statements emanating from the Alcoholytes, of which let the foregoing, & following sample, set the example: Fanewscard #35 opens with a note anent an LA mtg including Ashton, Coger, Yerke, Bronson, Brown, Freehafer & Fern. It is not untrue, it's news of a nature, & they have a ryt to publicize it, a ryt which apparently theyre going to exercize to the limit to make themselves look more active than the LASFS. In this instance the item myt as well have read: LA mtg--Ashton, Coger, Ackerman, Morojo, Kepner, Brown & Clyne. The one mtg was in the morning at my place; the other in the afternoon at one of "their" places. And I'll give U odds on which was the more scientifiational. Anyway, as I say, I noe not what corse others of the LASFS may take, but for myself I am not going to waste my time with this social activity in the fanpress of "Keeping up with the Jonahs."

((I will leave 4e's comments to stand for themselves; I think you'll agree that they are well able to do so. Now I turn you to a gentleman who has a different slant on the whole affair, one that I can't see eye-to-eye with but that I find interesting nevertheless. This is reproduced exactly as it was received. It was typed on a piece of yellow second sheet paper, enclosed in a legal size white envelope with "The Indianapolis Star" printed in the upper left hand corner; and postmarked at the Grand Central Annex, New York, N. Y., March 15, 1944, 5:30 PM. I have compared the typing with that of several fans who might have written it but cannot identify it. Read on. . . . --Larry))

ACKZY HOAKSIE

By Oliver King Smythe

One could have expected that Ackerman would pull the most successful hoax since Singleton. There was every evidence of it -- yet for some reason the fans bit again. And most particularly fandom's supposed champ hoaxer himself, Julius Unger, fell the hardest. It's the old story of the biter biten.

His sense of humor has been Ackerman's most outstanding feature for years. But, like the purloined letter of Poe, what should have been obvious to all was hid by its very prominence. Yet when the fine old experienced hand of Jack Erman turns up in plain sight, nobody recognizes it.

He had even supplied his intended fan victims with clues. In advance, no less, of the actions. Postcards sent out announcing a break-up of the Mor-jack partnership. Followed by a reconciliation with the two and Pogo. They should have guessed pranks were in the air.

Now the fans are deluged with cunningly worded outcries against Ackerman and his dictatorship, Ackerman and his prudishness, Ackerman the humorless. None of the outcries ever give facts and figures, but somehow that didn't seem to be noted by the gullible. They felt like believing, and Ackerman put it over beautifully.

But what of the supposed split between Ack and Mo? None of the decriers, "Knanves" (Get it--knaves, knaves, look it up, boys, a knave is a roguishly clever trickster...), resigners indicate any split. Ack-mo is solid as a rock.

And what of the joyful card announcing the addition of Pogo to the indestructable two? Now we hear that Pogo's house is the center of the anti-ack opposition. Strike anyone odd? Nope, the dopes fell. They forget that Pogo is like unto a niece to Morojo.

Ackerman the prude, we are supposed to swallow. And every Vom shrieks sex. Ackerman the humorless? Ack-ack! Ackerman the dictator? No one notices how everybody that comes to LA gets a chance to govern the club. Nobody can add.

You see, fans, it's this way: Two plus two equals Four. And the LASFS blows up. Blows fandom all over Ackerman's vest pocket.

((I had hoped for a lot more comments on the first issue of "Scrappy" than I received, chums. Perhaps the thing wasn't responsible for any seething activity in your think-tank, eh? And perhaps this one won't be, either. I hesitate to make a statement of policy for the sheet, but in general: News and reviews go in NEBULA. Anything else fits in here. And when I say "anything" I mean practically anything printable providing it would be interesting to the fans. Got a grouch? Go ahead, grouch. An idea for a poll that hasn't been used yet? We'll take it. An off-trail idea that won't quite make a regular article? Write a letter. Play with these "hints" now, and in the meantime read the words of two fellows who are gentlemen and scholars. First, Jack Speer.

--Larry))

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22 Feb 44

Larry--

So to Beulah:

There oughta be a law against naming any more gatherings "conventions" unless there are at least ten people present. It gives nervous breakdowns on the Fancyclopedia. ((But suppose a convention is announced and planned to be really big--and then only nine people show up? It seems to me that the only solution is to distinguish between "major" and "minor" conventions, and the major ones should not be great in number.))

What means the T in Larry T Shaw? ((Taylor.))

About the promag review: Mite be some use in a department promptly giving the subject matter of each story in current pros according to a classification system, or in two or three words. Most of Rusty's comments, tho (I suppose it's Rusty running it), are in the nature of reviews, and comments merely suggested by what's in the stories. Such things are outa place in a newsheet, savoring of the FFFness. Don't mind "don't miss" and "pass over quietly" advice, tho I doubt that it affects much one's decisions on what to read, but any more detailed comments about quality exceed the gross distinctions on which there will be general agreement. (This, incidentally, is a fallacy behind the 10-point, and especially the even more finely divided rating systems.) Oh, I see it's Russ Wilsey doing it.

Widner's open letter in Beulah's Scrapbook is pretty strong, but there's nothing he says that I can take exception to. I think one source of misunderstanding is that RAP, in referring to sincere fans who did nothing to stop Degler, didn't mean us acti-fans, but the mere readers, scientifictionists, whom he somehow still thot would be reading his letter in FFF, which was addressed to them primarily, and whom he thot to be the body of fandom. Further evidence of his misapprehension of the state of affairs among us is calling on his hearers to cast out those who would discuss other things than the brickwork pattern on the Empire State Building's roof; he apparently thot them a small minority, consisting mainly of Deglers and 1938 Michels.

Was that INS item from Robinson that you reprinted actually on newsprint, a clipping from a paper? ((I didn't actually see the clipping but am convinced it was authentic.)) It seems to me to have the aspect of a good Fictitious but Definitely.

I am glad to hear that de la Ree deems his poll successful, and believes that it cut a true cross-

section of fan opinion; however, I can't accept his judgement on that. The inclusion of de la Ree ((and Shaw)) among the top ten, and prominent disproportions in the relative rankings of the others, casts a heavy doubt upon the poll's validity.

Gerry doesn't describe, in the Nebula account, his method of scoring the choices, but from examination of the figures, it appears that he allowed 10 points for first place, when ten choices were to be made, 9 for second, and so on to 1 for tenth. This looks like the obvious way to count them, but lookahere: Suppose the pollees had been naming their choice for best stories of all time, and five had named "The Time Machine" in eighth, ninth or tenth place, while one harmless jerk (no offense intended) named "Ark of Fire" in first place. Under the "obvious" method of scoring, those two stories would come out even. Now suppose instead of asking that the stories be named in order, the poller had just asked his friends to name the ten best. Then "The Time Machine" would have run four lengths ahead of "Ark of Fire". I don't advocate the latter type of poll, I think some weight should be given to the relative rank in each man's opinion, but it seems that the two should be compromised. When I was running the IPO, I got the point value for first place by doubling the total number of places, so that in this case first place would be 20 points, and tenth place would be 11 points. So in our example Wells' story would run 3 to 1 over Ark of Fire. That's just a rule of thumb device; I don't claim any statistical justification for it. ((When even Campbell admits his inability to work out a perfect method, it seems like a case of Secret Unattainable.))

As further evidence that poll-taking isn't as simple as it looks, consider questions like "average age", on which a typical figure must be found. I've pointed out to Widner that the median, that is, the middle figure in the spread, is likely to be a better guide than the arithmetical average, which may be thrown way off by a few extreme figures, and may be a figure that represents no one (no one's age, in this case).

Gerry has made a singularly poor approach to the problem of getting a representative cross-section. There are two possible attacks. One is to cover the field as completely as possible; and that means getting all the fans, not merely those who subscribe to one particular fanzine, and not merely those who will write in on their own initiative in answer to a request--you need to at least put a self-addressed postcard in their hands. The other is to poll a small picked group. I thot Gerry was doing that, when you said he was polling fifty selected fans. Now it turns out that he sent out 43 postcards, and that they covered all the fans whose addresses he had. If he knows only 43 fans' addresses, when the FAPA has 65, he can't be very well acquainted with the field (tho he did assist in publishing Sun-Spots) ((Those in the know can vouch for the fact that Gerry published SUN SPOTS, doing almost all of the actual work; the others were the assistants. And Gerry is just returning to activity now.)); and a newcomer's circle of acquaintances is likely to be more lopsided and less representative than the fan's of long standing.

Another sign of inexpertness in handling the poll is that when two fen tied for fifth place, he named the next guy below as being in sixth place; in all, he gives us 13 top-ten fans! ((Gerry didn't do that; I did. He merely listed the results in a column, with no division. But what are you going to do in case of a tie?))

If you publish this, I hope Gerry won't take it amiss. You gotta experiment, and be

criticised, to learn.

Anyway, what it leads up to is that I'm taking a little poll of the top 15 as found by the Poll Cat. Tho there are obvious inaccuracies in that top-ten (such as the including of John L Gergen) due to fen's preference for fellows in their own vicinity, whom they've met, it does provide a starting point for getting expert opinion.

JFS

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((Now, Donald A. Wollheim))

Feb. 17, 1944

Dear Larry:

"Beulah's Scrapbook" received and like it. It's a nice idea and a swell first issue. The Widner letter is a classic; it's what should have been said to Rap and it was handled in the appropriate manner. Hope you sent Rap a copy ((I'll say I did!)) and hope to hell he chokes over it.

It has riled me for years to think of that little snake standing up in front of the Chicon and telling the fans to their faces that he thought they were all a bunch of jerks. And the dopes clapped him too!

The Raym letters were stuff and stuff. The letter and clipping from Robinson were ugly, but...

But it seems to me that the lesson to be derived from that terrible incident is the need for fandom. You can see that the young man's parents were dopes who couldn't understand stf or its dreams and tried to thwart the boy's background. What Ross Browne, Jr., needed, and needed desperately was a fan group of friends, or at the least fan correspondents (though they are not nearly so effective). He needed fellows who saw things his way and who could keep him on a solid basis. As it was he had no outlet for the explosive concepts of stf except inward brooding, without any guidance or help from sympathetic minds. There must be thousands of such fellows, intelligent, highly sensitive, cosmically minded, who never get the encouragement they desperately need. They all don't go this way, but most of them are warped, upset physically, or defeated mentally when they fail to get sympathy from someone in the world around them. The need for fan clubs, for more fan contacts, and above all for some help in this line from fan-minded editors is and always has been urgent.

This is a question for fans to face and solve. Most of us have felt as Ross Browne Jr must have felt at one time or another. Fandom is a tremendous benefit psychologically to those of the world who have sensitive vision in the future and in the greatness of the possibilities of man. It should find a way to master the problem. ((BRAVO!))

Regards,



Don Wollheim